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Cultural Learning Processes through Local Wisdom: A Case Study on Adult and Lifelong Learning in Thailand

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Cultural Learning Processes through Local Wisdom: A Case Study on Adult and Lifelong Learning in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This article provides the background and concept of Thailand Lifelong Learning [LLL], even attempting a definition. The Thai LLL vision encompasses strategies for developing human qualities such as integrity, self-reliance, adaptability, resilience, and spirituality, to name a few. In some regards LLL seeks to recapture a more fully-developed perspective, on what in earlier times and places [1238 AD in Thailand], was called 'indigenous education', as it now pursues the benefits of a vibrant Learning Society. Progress of LLL in Thailand at times seems to be very slow and methodological rather than dynamic. It stems from developing a policy of learning processes for establishing solid education systems – Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal. LLL also has developed by means of garnering and integrating 'Local Wisdom' [a Thai term designating important valued human experience] into what has become known as 'cultural learning processes'. This Local Wisdom is held by 'Wisdom Teachers' and encompasses nine areas, as follows: agriculture, handicraft/cottage industry, traditional medicine, conservation of natural resources, funding/community economics, fine arts, languages/literatures, philosophy/religion/tradition, and food/nutrition. Government Organizations and Private Non-Governmental Organizations have strongly supported and have been major forces for advancing cultural learning, LLL, and what may be labeled as a 'Learning Society'. In addition, collaboration between Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok [Thailand's premier university] and Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, USA, has helped Thai LLL advance immeasurably and move toward becoming a Learning Society from 2010 to 2015. Added to this, and provided a Model of Cultural Learning, with recommendations for improvement at the National and Community levels. It concludes with assurances toward its creating diversity within the constituencies to be served, strengthening a self-sufficient economy, solidifying moral values, and enhancing Thailand's becoming a vibrant and flourishing Lifelong Learning Society.

Keywords: Cultural Learning, Cultural Learning Processes, Learning Society, Lifelong Education, Lifelong Learning, Local Wisdom, Thai Wisdom Teacher

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the world of the 21st century, lifelong learning is considered necessary for human beings from birth to death through formal, non-formal and informal learning/education. It would almost seem that the 21st century has already established itself as being labeled the Lifelong Learning (LLL) Century. This article moves quite slowly (not with flashes of lightning and claps of thunder) with the very deliberate establishing of numerous branches and stages of education/learning. Every aspect if this ultimately contributes a steady LLL movement which culminated in a Model of Cultural Learning that exemplifies LLL as an overall concept holding the nation and society together, as well as its sustaining life in all its aspects. Formal, Non-Formal, Informal Education, couples with nine aspects of Local Wisdom and Cultural Learning, adding Governmental and Private Organizations support along with the encouraging efforts and collaboration of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, and Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri in the USA helping to drive a monumental LLL movement. It has been shown that lifelong learning makes a significant contribution to increasing and developing Thai citizens' integrity, knowledge, self-reliance, and ability to adjust to changing circumstances with dignity, in a variety of cultural and environmental settings. In short, lifelong learning is a requirement for a knowledge-based economy/learning society and it is now considered a particularly suitable educational philosophy for a world society where societal, economic, political, scientific, and technological changes are rapid. Also addressed is the emergence, implementation, and sustaining of the Thai system of lifelong learning that recaptures and seeks to more fully develop and integrate the early (1238 A.D.) Thai perspective of 'indigenous education', for the future benefit of a more vibrant Learning Society.

Beginning with and following the dawn of the 21st century, the Thai government's policy, the National Act of 1999, the National Education Act of B.E. 2542¹ (1999), the Promotion

of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551 (2008) and The Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016), aims to develop integrity, knowledge, resilience, and spirituality in all age groups. Thailand is moving forward to promote and support much more lifelong learning activities by engaging in delivering basic informal education, literacy promotion and continuing education, developing educational resources and educational technology in all types of education, as well as implementing research and activities in lifelong learning to further development of human potential and sustainable development of the country among members of all backgrounds.

2. BACKGROUND OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THAILAND

Lifelong learning in Thailand has been in place since the eras when formal schools had not been established. It can be traced back as early as 1238 AD to the Sukhothai period and early Ratanakosin periods before laws on compulsory education were proclaimed. An early educational/learning system developed in Thailand was called by the name of 'indigenous education'. The distinctive features of indigenous education [hardly found in the present Thai system] are: learning by doing, learning through authentic experiences, individualized instruction, and happy learning. Thailand's own indigenous educational/learning system was informal and provided in three institutions; home, temple and palace. Parents taught children family occupation, social values and traditions while monks taught reading, morality and Buddhism. The palace was the place where all kinds of the nation's classical art were developed, preserved and taught. (The Office of the National Education Commission, 2010).

During these periods, education was provided in the temples, mostly for boys, in the King's palace, and in individual scholars' houses. At home, the parents taught and trained

their children about communication, manners, behavioral conduct, and family career skills. As a matter of fact, these traditions and cultures were the source of knowledge and experience for people of all ages. Although it had long been practiced, the expression “lifelong learning” did not become officially apparent until in the reign of Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramintharamaha Chulalongkorn Phra Chunla Chom Klao Chao Yu Hua (King Rama V). In 1884, the first school for the people was founded and the education system transformed into a more school-based system. Education was officially arranged for the benefit of school age children, i.e. for elementary education to higher education levels. After the Kingdom of Thailand had changed the governmental system from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932, education was recognized as a crucial means for national progress and development under the new democratic system. There had been arrangements for offering education to some other age groups, but the concept of lifelong continuous education had yet to be realized. It was around this time or perhaps shortly after that the concept, vision, progress, and promotion [or policy] of lifelong learning began to take shape.

3. THE CONCEPT OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THAILAND

The concept of lifelong learning has influenced the perception of Thai people since the educational reform in B.E. 2517 (1974). Later, aspects of lifelong learning were included in the National Education Plan B.E. 2520 (1977) and were mentioned in several educational institutes to promote development of non-formal and informal education programs to serve the people who lack the educational opportunities that enable them to fulfill their lives with the same opportunities as others in society.

According to National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999), lifelong education means:

Education resulting from integration of three types of education system: formal, non-formal,

and informal education so as to create capability for continuous development of quality of life. Learning is therefore a part of life which takes place at all times and in all places. It is a continuous lifelong process from birth to the end of our lives, beginning with learning within families, communities, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, etc.

In all likelihood, from these ideas and this concept a definition of lifelong learning could be condensed and summarized (Henschke, 2014; Charungkittikul & Henschke, 2014) as a master concept or andragogical principle regarded as the continuous and never complete development, changes, and adaptation in human consciousness including learning that occurs partly through deliberate action of Non-Formal, Informal, Formal educational systems, but even more as a result of the business of living; and, may be intentional or unintentional that includes acquiring greater understanding of other people and the world at large, based on six pillars of learning: learning to know – acquiring appropriate information, comprehending the content subject matter, and employing the instruments of its application in various situations; learning to do-be able to act creatively on one’s environment, learning to live together- participate and co-operate with other people in all human activities; learning to be -an essential progression which proceeds from the previous three; learning to change- encourages changes in behavior to create a more viable and fairer society for everyone; and, learning for sustainable development -- efforts towards sustainability in any field are built on processes for communicating, learning, and sharing knowledge, engaging people in their multiple roles as individuals, and as members of communities and organizations.

Learning environments are very important to the creation of a lifelong learning society as are the support and facilitation of all stakeholders such as family, religious organizations, local wisdom, Governmental Organizations (GO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), universities, private sector and civil society.

Hence, the ultimate goal of lifelong learning is the creation of a learning society which helps to empower people, expand their capacities and choices in life and enable them and their societies to cope with rapid change in their personal, social and working lives. Lifelong learning is therefore a term that is widely used in a variety of contexts, as indicated above. However, in the Thai context, lifelong learning has at least two dimensions. One dimension is in terms of the vertical life span of a person. Education does not terminate at the time a person leaves the school, but continues throughout life. Learning is acquired from formal, non-formal and informal education. Another dimension is concerned with the actual purpose of learning; it should focus on the ways of life of people, and work toward the improvement of their lives (Pichayasathit, 2001).

Therefore, the concept of lifelong learning in Thailand is used interchangeably with lifelong education. For example, lifelong education means integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education among people within various contexts. Some usages of the term 'lifelong learning' to refer to adult education and other forms of non-formal education.

4. THE VISION OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THAILAND

Thailand applied and implemented the notion of lifelong learning in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 (1999), the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999), the Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551 (2008), and the tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (BE 2550-2554). These have served as master legislation on education of the country, leading to significant education and learning reform and providing principles and challenging guidelines for the development of Thai education. The vision of lifelong learning in Thailand includes strategies for development of human qualities toward a knowledge-based and learning society which emphasizes the

promotion of human development for integrity, knowledge, and resilience, where learning and spirituality of all groups in all ages will be developed throughout life.

The Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education is a key organization for delivering lifelong learning along with network parties (e.g., a person, family, community, communal society, local administrative organization, private body, professional body, religious institution, business operator or other bodies) to promote development of human resources appropriate to future alterations of the population structure as well as economic and social structures, and the qualities of Thai people. Finally, Thailand is moving forward to promote and support lifelong learning activities among community members by engaging in delivering basic informal education, literacy promotion and continuing education, developing educational resources and educational technology in all types of education, and implementing research and activities among members of all backgrounds.

5. THE PROGRESS OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THAILAND

The Education Project of 1951 contained adult education within the plan. At that time, Thailand received assistance and advice for educational arrangements from UNESCO. The National Education Plan of 1977 referred to "lifelong learning" for the first time, stating that the aim of education is a "lifelong continuous procedure" wherein education in the school system was provided, from pre-elementary education level to higher education level, the same as other previous education plans. Lifelong education is now considered a particularly suitable educational philosophy for a world society and is progressing in Thailand along the lines of what was previously articulated; thus, providing a foundation for developing and implementing a sustainable policy of Thai cultural learning.

6. PROMOTING (OR DEVELOPING A POLICY OF) CULTURAL LEARNING PROCESSES IN THAILAND THROUGH LIFELONG EDUCATION

This section focuses on the introduction of education through Thai educational systems: Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal. Then, cultural learning processes are presented and articulated through the nine [9] areas of local Thai wisdom, as well as exemplified through Governmental and Private Organizations. Conclusions are then identified, a model of cultural learning depicted, ending with recommendations for improving the cultural learning future through the national and community levels of local wisdom.

6.1. The Introduction of Education Systems

The National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) stated that educational systems in Thailand comprised of three types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal educational institutions are authorized to provide any one or all of the three types of education. Credits accumulated by learners shall be transferable within the same type or between different types of education, regardless whether the credits have been accumulated from the same or from different educational institutions, including learning from non-formal or informal education, vocational training, or from work experience. Learning is therefore a part of life which takes place at all times and in all places. It is a continuous lifelong process, going on from birth to the end of our life, beginning with learning in families, communities, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, wisdom, etc., in order to enable learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality (The National Education Act B.E. 2542, 1999).

6.1.1. Formal Education

Formal education shall specify the aims, methods, curricula, duration, assessment, and evaluation conditional to its completion. In Thailand, formal education is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education. The Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001) consists of twelve-year core curriculum with 4 grades level: Level 1 (primary education grades 1-3), Level 2 (primary education grades 4-6), Level 3 (secondary education grades 1-3 or grades 7-9 in American system), and Level 4 (secondary education grades 4-6 or grades 10-12). The substance of the curriculum is assembled into 8 subject groups of learning processes: (1) Thai Language; (2) Mathematics; (3) Science; (4) Social Studies, Religion and Culture; (5) Health and Physical Education; (6) Art; (7) Career and Technology; and (8) Foreign Languages. The curricula at all levels of education shall be diversified and commensurate with each level, with the aim of improving the quality of life suitable for each individual's age and potentiality. There are also academic upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary schools and comprehensive schools offering both academic and vocational tracks. Students who choose the academic stream usually intend to enter a university. Vocational schools offer programs that prepare students for employment or further studies. While Higher education is divided into two levels: lower-than-degree level and degree level. Differentiation or equivalence of the various levels of non-formal or informal education shall be as stipulated in the ministerial regulations.

Formal Education in Thailand is provided mainly by the Thai government through the Ministry of Education. Administration and control of public and private universities is carried out by the Ministry of University Affairs. Early childhood and basic education shall be provided in the following institutions: (1) Early childhood development institutions, namely: childcare centers; child development centers; pre-school child development centers of religious institutions; initial care centers for

disabled children or those with special needs, or early childhood development centers under other names. (2) Schools, namely: state schools, private schools, and those under jurisdiction of Buddhist, or other religious institutions. (3) Learning centers, namely: those organized by non-formal education agencies; individuals; families; communities; community organizations; local administration organizations; private organizations; professional bodies; religious institutions; enterprises; hospitals; medical institutions; welfare institutes; and other social institutions. Higher education shall be provided in universities, institutes, colleges, or those under other names in accord with the laws on higher education institutions, those on the establishment of such institutions and other relevant laws. Finally, vocational education and occupational training shall be provided in educational institutions belonging to the State or the private sector, enterprises, or those organized through co-operation of educational institutions and enterprises, in accord with the Vocational Education Act and relevant laws.

In Thailand the local wisdom knowledge was integrated in school curriculum or so called local curriculum for the learners to be able to learn from real world and local community contexts. This in some way became a beginning revival of the earlier educational perspective in what was labeled 'indigenous education'. Some of the terms that became interchangeable were 'Local Wisdom', 'Indigenous Knowledge', or 'Thai Wisdom', which will be dealt with more extensively later in this paper. Besides, the Thai local wisdom holders or wisdom teachers were invited to share their knowledge and experience within school settings in a new role as educators and occupation trainers. Thus it is recognized that local wisdom is a support power for formal education in order to enhance the national education system.

6.1.2. Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education in Thailand plays important roles for the out of school youth and adults. Non-Formal Education (NFE) means

educational activities which have clear target groups of service users and educational objectives, forms, curricula, methods of provision and course or training durations which are flexible and diverse according to the needs and learning aptitudes of such target groups, and standard procedures for assessments and evaluations of educational performance for the benefit of granting educational credentials or classification of educational performances (The Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551, 2008).

There are four main programs and activities to promote lifelong learning in the Thai context provided by Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC) including: 1) Basic non-formal education: general and vocational education for NFE learners based on curricula that offer basic knowledge and literacy promotions; 2) Education activities for vocational development, vocational skills training through the use of technology, and vocational development activities for the disabled; 3) Education activities for life skill development; and 4) Education for social/ community development.

Local wisdom involves the non-formal education programs/ activities into two main aspects: the content and the instructor. The core knowledge of local knowledge or wisdom is embedded in each local curriculum for different non-formal education activities such as the non-formal basic education, the literacy campaign, and functional literacy programs, etc. In addition, the local wisdom holders or wisdom teachers help support the occupation development project, a program comprising of both lectures and workshops. They are the important learning network group to develop the non-formal education toward their teaching and sharing during the training courses for vocational certificates, short-course vocational training, interest group programs social/ community development and life skill development activities. These Local Wisdom Holders or Teachers aim to provide education for promoting life skills of the general public, stimulating them to see their own value and prestige, namely family study, music, sport, narcotic, democracy,

natural resources and environmental conservation, physical health and hygiene, moral values and ethics, local wisdom, archeology, etc., using different methods.

6.1.3. Informal Education

Informal Education means educational activities in the daily lifestyle of a person through which a person may choose to continue learning throughout his/her lifetime pursuant to the interests, needs, opportunities, preparedness and learning aptitude of each person (Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551, 2008). Therefore, informal education shall enable learners to learn by themselves according to their interests, potentialities, readiness and opportunities available from persons, society, environment, media, or other sources of knowledge. The promotion and support of non-formal and informal education shall uphold the following principles:

1. **Non-formal education:** (a) equality of access to and receipt of wide scale, extensive, fair and quality education as appropriate for the living conditions of the people; (b) decentralization of powers to educational establishments and participation of network parties in the provision of education; and
2. **Informal education:** (a) access to educational resources which are consistent with the interests and lifestyles of learners in every target group; (b) development of educational resources in order to create diversity in both local wisdom components and educational technology components; (c) provision of educational framework or guide-lines that are beneficial to learners (Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E. 2551 (2008): section 6).

A person, family, community, communal society, local administrative organization, private body, professional body, religious institution, business operator and other bodies as lifelong learning resources (e.g. public libraries,

museums, art galleries, zoological gardens, public parks, botanical gardens, science and technology parks, sport and recreation centers, data bases), and other sources of learning provide the Informal Education to the target groups or has the objectives of carrying out non-formal and informal education. However the core organization that is responsible for organizing the activities which promote and support informal education is the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education.

At present, ONFEC is responsible for upgrading the education level of the work-force, alleviation of poverty, and promoting lifelong learning. One of the active learning partners is the local wisdom holders or wisdom teachers. In each area, the local wisdom holders/ teachers are part of the non-formal education services which encompass: 1) promotion of functional literacy for those who cannot perform basic calculation, cannot read or write Thai, the national language, and for those who have lost the functional literacy due to the lack of opportunity to read, write or calculate in their daily life; 2) continuing education program for those who need to continue their learning such as vocational development, education for life skills development, and education for the community and social development; and, 3) promotion of lifelong learning to encourage reading, searching and informal learning of people. The activities include: distance education programs via educational radio and television, educational science activities from science centers, activities for reading promotion by public libraries and various kinds of learning activities through several community learning centers of the local wisdom.

To sum up, lifelong education should therefore be the balanced integration between global knowledge and indigenous knowledge for sustainable development in any community. Also, education should promote the appreciation of cultural diversity and the acceptance of other cultures. Cultural intelligence and the educational intelligence should be engaged in learning networked self-learning in order to play

a significant role in today's world development. However all sectors of the society must participate in the provision of education, including educational establishments to provide formal, non-formal and informal education, either in one or in all three forms, through a combination of all three forms of education in order to enable the continual development of education and the people's quality of life. This would create a learning and intellectual society, which would have an effect in the development of manpower and further advancement of the nation.

At the heart of the learning society is the commitment of all members to a set of values and the system of lifelong learning, and sharing knowledge with its members and others on a regular lifelong basis that enhances the opportunity of all community members to develop their full capacity of knowledge, skills, and attitude. Local wisdom, together with the knowledge sharing among people in the society, are the most essential components in the learning society. Charungkaittikul (2011a) mentioned clearly that learning society characteristics generally include the nature of a group of individuals residing within one locality, an agency or a community engaged in single or multiple matters simultaneously. It involves preservation, nourishment, rehabilitation, protection, promotion, assistance, development, and distribution through information technology, learning resources, local wisdoms and knowledge that allow members of the society to create, share, and use knowledge, common skills, and opinions with fellow members of the same and other communities on a regular lifelong basis. They generate new knowledge and appropriate knowledge management systems, as well as making the best life decisions for the prosperity and well-being of its people. A learning society comprises of learners, learning providers, learning resources, knowledge/wisdom, lifelong learning activities, learning climates, learning networks, knowledge management, and learning organizations. Finally, local wisdom enables lifelong learning in society. It not only strengthens the community's economic situation on the basis of self-sufficiency, but

also in terms of moral values, and local culture among community people.

6.2. Cultural Learning Processes through Local Wisdom

According to the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is local knowledge unique to a given culture or society. It is the systematic body of knowledge acquired by local people through the accumulation of experiences, informal experiments, and intimate understanding of the environment in a given culture. In the case of Thailand, Indigenous Knowledge is substituted by the term, "Local Wisdom" or "Thai Wisdom", which means the body of knowledge, abilities, and skills of Thai people accumulated through many years of experience, learning, development, and transmission. It has helped solve the problems and contributed to the development of our people's way of life in accordance with the changing time and environment."

Local wisdom knowledge of the Thai wisdom teachers is comprised of nine areas: 1) Thai wisdom master of agriculture, 2) Thai wisdom teachers of handicraft, and cottage industry, 3) Thai wisdom teachers of Thai traditional medicine, 4) Thai wisdom teachers of management and conservation of natural resources, 5) Thai wisdom teachers of funding and community economics, 6) Thai wisdom teachers of fine arts, 7) Thai wisdom teachers of local languages and literatures, 8) Thai wisdom teachers of philosophy, religion, and tradition, and, 9) Thai wisdom teachers of food and nutrition. The core knowledge of each Thai wisdom aspect is described as follows:

1. Thai wisdom teachers of agriculture mainly emphasized their knowledge and had their own techniques of the knowledge transmission to various agriculture sectors and the economic systems. There were collaborations among the nearby network of the Thai wisdom teachers based on their specialty;
2. Thai wisdom teachers of handicraft, and cottage industry mainly emphasized using

the community's natural resources for serving the basic needs, and applied the new technologies to manufacture such as transformation, production, consummation, and dispensation;

3. Thai wisdom teachers of Thai traditional medicine, focused on the self-reliance of the community members in terms of health;
4. Thai wisdom teachers of management and conservation of natural resources, emphasized the knowledge of forest management and natural water sources in the community's forests which related to the community people's lifestyle, knowledge about ecological system and natural water supply;
5. Thai wisdom teachers of funding, and community economics, mainly focused on the life stability of community members;
6. Thai wisdom teachers of fine arts mainly emphasized creativity and succeeding the various kinds of arts to be with the community;
7. Thai wisdom teachers of languages and literatures mainly emphasized creativity and conserving dialectical languages and literatures, including the way of thinking inserted in literatures that apply in real life;
8. Thai wisdom teachers of philosophy, religion, and tradition mainly focused on application of religious philosophy and tradition to be consistent with the way of life and society;
9. Thai wisdom teachers of food and nutrition mainly emphasized devising nutritious food and being able to turn to the community products.

A study of the honor of the Thai wisdom teachers' developmental guideline in learning management for the complete purposes of educational, economical, and social development (Ratana-Ubol et al., 2007) indicated that the local wisdoms, Thai wisdom teachers or experts in the community are the key persons to promote and support lifelong learning directly through their Thai wisdom learning centers.

Cultural learning, also called cultural transmission, is the way a group of people within a society or culture tend to learn and pass on new information. Learning styles are greatly influenced by how a culture socializes with its children and young people. In the case of Thailand, "Local Wisdom" or "Thai Wisdom", means the body of knowledge, abilities, and skills of Thai people accumulated through many years of experience, learning, development, and transmission. It has helped in solving the problems and contributed to the development of our people's way of life in accordance with the changing time and environment. The most important persons in passing on the unique culture and tradition are the wisdom holders or wisdom teachers who live in different parts of the country.

The individual knowledge held by Thai wisdom holders or teachers is well recognized to help enhancing, promoting and supporting lifelong learning in Thai communities. Thai wisdom teachers in each community are the key persons to promote lifelong learning directly in their Thai wisdom learning centers through their learning center or demonstration areas in their houses (Ratana-Ubol et al., 2007). They are representatives of diversified areas of local knowledge. These teachers must have accumulated their knowledge and skills for many years and been recognized for their contribution to the transmission of local knowledge to the communities. After being selected, they are required to organize a program of teaching Thai knowledge to young people and receive financial support accordingly. However, the government should pay attention to and be concerned with the strategies to promote or provide the honor to the Thai wisdom holders or teachers in order to be known and accepted by the public. To promote recognition of Thai wisdom teachers is one of the key strategies in encouraging and empowering them. Additionally, Thai wisdom teachers need to be encouraged and supported by the Thai Educational System in rural areas, develop the honor of the Thai wisdom holder continually, support Thai wisdom teachers' learning, publicize the Thai wisdom teachers'

learning, and organize the division to support Thai wisdom teachers in each area. (Ratana-Ubol et al., 2007)

Finally, management of lifelong learning by the community consists of many significant characteristics such as: 1) variety in the contents of the activities with examples of this diversity including a focus on vocational development, social welfare, conservation, human rights, and community activities; 2) arranged learning activities are most likely related to problems on a policy level, such as those relating to forests, local alcoholic drinks, dams, large state projects, etc., with one part of the arrangement having a caretaker or consultant from a private development organization assisting in learning management, and in the other part (or situation) dictating the appropriate steps for community leaders to take; and, 3) these learning groups are highly dynamic in terms of the increase/decrease of numbers of members, often dissolving the group or breaking the group down into smaller groups. Another interesting feature is the creation of networks across groups, or across the communities. Some examples include, but are not limited to the Long Lasting Agricultural Network, the City Doctors Network, the Network of Activity-Research of Buddhist Monks, the Community Forest Network, the Network of Youth Conserving Nature.

Apart from the local wisdom teachers or Thai wisdom teachers, the learning centers located in every community served as places for holding the cultural activities in different communities, as well as implementing the lifelong learning activities for community members in Thailand. Thai knowledge learning can be categorized in three types: Thai knowledge Learning Unit where an individual knowledge teacher operates his or her own learning center; Mobile Thai knowledge Learning Unit where the teachers will move from place to place; and, Thai knowledge Learning Center where Thai knowledge teachers of various fields will take turns teaching at these rather large-scale centers. Cultural learning has been implemented through several organizations both government

and private organizations, some of which are discussed below.

6.2.1. Government Organizations

The Office of Non-formal and Informal Education is the main organization responsible for non-formal and informal education. The Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education has the vision of building up the extensive intellectual society by promoting access to quality lifelong learning among the people across the country, as well as creating the atmosphere of a learning society that can contribute to the lifelong learning. Hence, it has promoted the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) for development and effectiveness of the learning programs; accelerated the motivation and support of every sector concerned to promote and participate in the conduct of non-formal and informal education activities; developed programs of non-formal and informal education in order to upgrade the quality of the learners and clients to enable them to meet the qualified educational standard; and accelerate development of quality standard of the teacher civil service and civil service officers, the educational personnel as well as the NFE teachers and network parties. Lifelong Education programs and activities provided by Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC) can be categorized into four main programs and activities. For instance, there are programs designed to provide basic knowledge and skills, in particular General Adult Education and Functional Literacy Programs; there are programs designed to provide training in vocational and occupational skills; programs to provide education for life skill development; and, programs designed to provide social/ community development.

Apart from Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Community Learning Centers (CLC) are recognized as effective delivery mechanisms of various learning and training activities to promote lifelong learning in Thailand. The implementations strategies of community learning centers in Thailand

are community involvement, participation, and ownership. All community members are encouraged to participate in organizing educational and quality of life improvement activities in their community. This new concept of CLC implementation leads to the capability building and self-reliance of the community. This helps enhance a sustainable development of the community as a whole. There are two main organizations – the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education, and the Local Administrative organizations – whose main responsibilities are to promote lifelong learning for all, and to promote and support local wisdom holders/wisdom teachers:

- **Office of Non-formal and Informal Education:** The Community Learning Center run by the office of Non-formal and Informal Education has carried out lifelong learning promotion in terms of educational activities that provide educational services such as: educational management on basic studies, education management on vocational development, education management on life quality betterment, and educational management on social and community development;
- **Local Administrative organizations:** Local administrative organizations play an important role promoting lifelong learning in Thailand, in the form of management of the basic education and non-formal education. Examples of activities provided by local administrative organizations include: public libraries, a community internet room, a community academic room, a learning room focused on community careers, community stores, a ground for community activities that provides playthings for children, arrangements for creative learning activities, and open spaces for family activities, and a room for demonstrating culture and for local intellectuals. This is the exact linkage of formal, informal, and non-formal learning under integrated management for encouraging learning in remote areas. In such an environment, local

people are more welcomed and accepted by external societies. Educators from educational agencies and other societies make their observation tours in communities and transfer knowledge to local people. Local and neighboring produce and food recipes are distributed at reasonable prices. Hence, the community learning center may be organized as a place for the collection of books and media for learning at any time, as well as for being a place for meetings and the exchange of knowledge as the Thai wisdom learning center, with activities organized by community people or by work units outside the community.

6.2.2. Private Organizations

In Thailand, NGOs are the main groups to organize several lifelong learning activities. When formal education is not adequate to meet the development needs of individuals in the community, NGOs can take the lead in arranging learning procedures. The place of operation takes part in the promotion of lifelong learning management of learning in the work place, and it has three characteristics: Cooperation with the office of Non-Formal and Informal Education under the Ministry of Education; Self-directed management; and Education managed by the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education. Pathumcharoenwattana & Charungkaittikul (2009) proposed some interesting characteristics of private development organizations that make arrangements for lifelong learning in Thailand. They are as follows:

1. These private development organizations derived from expansion of small learning communities that desired to upgrade their knowledge;
2. Other NGOs act as caretakers or consultants to the people. Small numbers of developers, academics, and independent researchers assess the weaknesses in the community which often does not keep records, lacks individuals with management skill, and lacks the capability to convey knowledge

systematically. Some examples of lifelong learning managed by private development institutes are: the Institute for Learning Potentiality Development of the Community, carried out under the Committee for Coordination of Northern Private Development; the Long Lasting Agriculturalists Community Institute, operated under the Development of Community Potentiality Foundation; the Factory School, operated under the Creation of Children and Youth Foundation; and, Semsikhalai, operated under the Sathian Koses – Nakhapratheep Foundation. The Haripunchai Institute is an example of operation by local researchers, while an example of operation by resource persons is the Midnight University, Friday University;

3. There are two major characteristics of learning process arrangements: 1) facilitating organization or caretaker; and, 2) learning arrangements institute;
4. The organization that manages these learning processes is a leader in the field of reproducing knowledge, applying knowledge, and making learning materials for the community. The organization plays a role in cooperation with local schools in developing curricula.

Therefore, the community learning centers had to be arranged and promoted in accordance with Lifelong Learning Centers. Each learning center was recommended to have the unique distinction of its community root, learning centers needed pleasant, joyful and lively atmosphere, community learning centers were suggested to stay up to date, Personnel Management was advised to have regular practice training, Research and Development was necessary, and community participation needed to be supported. The concept of lifelong learning is also applied in terms of development projects.

In summary, a community learning center serves as a center for conducting lifelong learning activities for the community people. It also serves as the common place for creating learning opportunities, knowledge transfer, as

well as basic exchange floors for experiences, technical issues, and local wisdom. The center also serves as community service source for providing various activities, which are consistent with the social changes in the globalization era, and hence encourages the development of 'learning' society while promoting the democratic way, personal ethics, morals with an aim toward self-reliance development that well serves as the cornerstone of long-term sustainable development.

In today's world, it is certain that there is nothing done to promote the learning of local knowledge, especially the information provided by the media. Thus, our future generations will definitely not understand where we are in the world or even lose the root of their culture. Therefore, education in the globalization age should therefore be the balanced integration between global knowledge and indigenous knowledge. The key aspect of culture is that it is not passed on biologically from the parents to the offspring, but rather learned through experience and participation. The process by which a child acquires his or her own culture is referred to as enculturation. Cultural learning allows individuals to acquire skills that they would be unable to acquire independently over the course of their lifetime (Van Schaik & Burkart, 2011).

Hence, the local wisdom makes its contribution to enabling lifelong learning in society, citizens also could seek for knowledge continuously by themselves, which leads to the learning society and strengthened community in terms of self-reliance. It not only strengthens the community's economic situation on the basis of self-sufficiency, but also moral values, and local culture among community people.

To draw together this idea, Thai cultural learning is integrated from multidisciplinary perspectives. It emphasizes the dimension of learning development from birth to death for everyone in the society. Objectives of Thai cultural learning are promoting people to learn culture that is fruitful for themselves and society in order to improve themselves to live in the rapidly changing society. Thai cultural learning

is learning from our way of life. People can learn through lifelong learning in their daily lives. They learn culture from all purposeful learning activities in the society by their own ways or methods during different times of their lives and with their own capabilities. They also learn from personal motivation for growth with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, attitude and competence. Thai cultural learning can occur in other cultural environments than the formal education delivery modes. Thai cultural learning process is drawing upon continuously changing cognitive, skills, affective, values and experiences by involving a variety of qualities of learning in life.

Thai Local wisdom is important to consider as the central aspect of change in many dimensions such as family, environment, work, community and society along with the individual aspects of life. The preparation and use of Local Thai wisdom should be collaborative among everyone in the society. Empowerment and collaborative interpretation occupies a central process in learning from the Thai local wisdom. Dialogue with practitioners in the community would be helpful for generalizing concepts to practices and also producing experiences in different areas which enhance people's capacity as well.

Cultural learning is autonomous in the learning process. It is considered as priority in Lifelong Education. People should discover their own way of life. The factors of promoting cultural learning processes in Thai society are as follows: (1) An appreciation for culture and the self enduring motivation, (2) the skills of self-directed learning, (3) cultural and social, and (4) cognitive competences seeking to improve ways of life.

Consequently Thai local wisdom Leaders should facilitate, develop and implement autonomous, collaborative and creative approaches to cultural learning.

Thai local wisdom leaders are accountable for the following three components in cultural learning: (1) cultural learning content, (2) process of cultural learning, and (3) cultural learning context including strategies and structures:

1. **Cultural learning content:** This refers to the 9 areas of Thai local wisdom in Thailand, mentioned earlier in this article. Cultural learning content includes both a deeper understanding of specific culture disciplines and particular psychological and andragogical matters such as motivation, competences of self-directed learning, understanding of culture and social and cognitive competences of seeking to improve ways of life;
2. **Cultural learning process:** This refers to the process of how Thai local wisdom leaders should engage with individual persons and groups for transferring the cultural learning content including determining goals, desired performance and learning outcomes, clarifying learning objectives, being a role model, demonstration, empowering, facilitating, scaffolding, coaching, and making concerns visible. Furthermore, Thai local wisdom leaders always open opportunities for applying cultural contents and refining it with authentic learning situations and practicing in their own situations;
3. **Cultural learning context:** This refers the extent to which cultural learning is situated in contexts that allow the development of practice in real life. Situated learning, experiential learning, action learning and authentic learning are considered to be relevant and valuable for the improvement of the cultural leaning context. People can each exchange ideas, develop and discuss new learning, receive reflection and use these things in her/his own life.

Although not directly connected to the formal aspects of the overall emergence of LLL and Cultural Learning in Thailand, Higher Education in Thailand has contributed much to the development of Thailand's lifelong learning [LLL] and Cultural Learning, in content, process and context. All of the efforts of higher education in Thailand toward advancing LLL and Cultural Learning are too numerous to mention. Nonetheless, Chulalongkorn University [CU],

Bangkok, Thailand, stands as an outstanding example in recent years of adding to and becoming especially prominent in supporting, researching and bringing lifelong learning and cultural learning forward in Thailand. Some of this has been orchestrated through faculty collaboration of CU and Lindenwood University (LU), St. Charles, Missouri in the United States of America.

During the most recent six year period (2010 – 2015) and beyond, between Chulalongkorn University (CU) and Lindenwood University (LU), this collaboration in LLL and Andragogy has been supported and orchestrated mainly through the combined impetus and energies of Dr. Archanya Ratana-Ubol, [currently Deputy Dean of the CU/LLL Faculty and CU Research] and Dr. John A. Henschke [currently LU Faculty Member and Chair of Andragogy]. Their relationship originated in 1983, as faculty and student in adult education/andragogy at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, USA, has been sustained through various threads up to this writing in 2014, and is anticipated to continue for many years to come.

The first thread of LLL collaboration between CU and LU started in the 2010-2011 academic year with a CU doctoral student coming to LU to study andragogy and lifelong learning (LLL) with faculty member, Professor John A. Henschke. This flow of masters and doctoral students from CU to LU continued with six students in 2013 Spring Semester, eight students in 2013 Fall Semester, nine students in 2014 Spring Semester, and five students in 2014 Fall Semester. One student in the group coming 2014 Fall Semester, will complete the doctoral program at LU in the subsequent three years.

The second thread of LLL collaboration between CU and LU took place in September, 2010, and June, 2011, with the first international video interaction between LU Faculty Professor Dr. John A. Henschke in St. Charles conducting a workshop with 100 CU Faculty and students participating in Bangkok; and, the second international video interactive workshop between Henschke conducting in St. Charles, with 100 Faculty and students participating in

Bangkok, from the Thai Ministry of Education, Distance Education Institute, and six universities – Kasetsart, Ramkhamhaeng, Srinakharinwirot, Silpakorn, Chulalongkorn, and Sukhhothai Thammathirat Open. This thread laid the groundwork for the CU Non-Formal Education, Department of Educational Policy, Management, and Leadership, to change their name to the Department of Lifelong Learning in 2011.

The third thread of LLL collaboration between CU and LU transpired through Suwithida Charungkaittikul coming from CU to LU for one year to work with LU Professor Henschke as a Doctoral Assistant in andragogy and LLL, continue work on her Doctoral Dissertation (Charungkaittikul, 2011b). The Learning Society Model proposed was worked through one community in each of the five regions of Thailand, to bring about a paradigm shift in each toward a Learning Society. The Learning Society is comprised of nine components, ten development principles, ten development processes, ten development strategies, and fourteen key success factors (Charungkaittikul, 2011a). During this process she published an international journal article (Charungkaittikul, 2011a), arranged for Dr. Ryan Guffey – LU's head of the International Office to do a Fulbright Scholarship at CU in 2012, defended her dissertation in September, 2011 (Charungkaittikul, 2011b), and was awarded the PhD Degree from CU in October, 2011. [* Note: In 2014 Guffey was promoted to LU Vice-President of Student Affairs].*

The fourth thread of LLL collaboration between CU and LU was initiated by Guffey during his Fulbright in 2012, in which he arranged for a LU professor Henschke to spend five weeks in the summer of 2013, teaching at CU in LLL and Andragogy while working with eight faculty and numerous students – 60 Bachelor, 14 Master, and 30 Doctoral. Topics and Sessions included: Workshop Agenda Setting for Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral Students in Andragogy and LLL; Commencement Farewell Ceremony of Encouragement and Career Success for Graduates of the LLL Program and Their

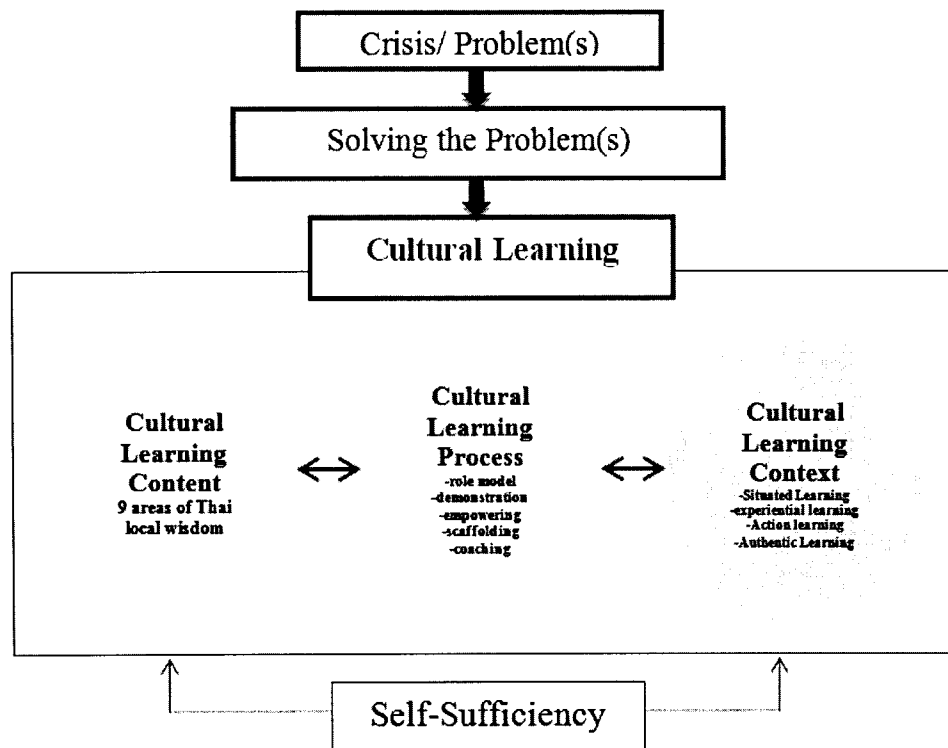
Honoring and Respect for the Faculty; Wai Kru Ceremony for Encouraging Incoming Students to the LLL Program; Private and Group Sessions with 22 Doctoral Students for Developing and Clarifying Topics and Research Scope/Structure for each of their Doctoral Dissertations; Developing a Personal LLL Orientation and Trusting Ones-Self in the Learning Process; Field Trip for Working with Schools of Blind, Handicapped, and Orphaned Students; History and Philosophy of Andragogy, LLL, Human Resource Development, Self-Directed Learning, Merging Adult Education Interests, Future Perspectives in LLL and Andragogy. In addition to all this, LU faculty member Henschke conducted a workshop session with 30 Master students and their faculty from the School of Business at CU, on the topic of Lifelong Learning and Creative Andragogical Leadership in the Corporate Community. Finally, Henschke met with the CU LLL Faculty to plan strategies for continued research collaboration between CU and LU, and held a Workshop for all CU Faculty on Research and Publication in the Academic Community which naturally was encompassed by the theme of LLL.

The fifth thread of LLL collaboration between CU and LU has been and will be a combination of Conference Presentations, Papers which are included in Conference Proceedings, Research Papers Published in a Book, Research Papers Published in Refereed Journals, and Conferences focused on LLL and Andragogy. The first article was published when the dissertation research on the Learning Society was in progress (Charungkaitikkul, 2011a). Progress on the research and its presentation about the Lifelong Learning Society paper presented at the 31st Research-to-Practice Conference and was a collaborative effort by CU and LU Faculty (Charungkaitikkul & Henschke, 2011). The completed Doctoral Dissertation on the Lifelong Learning Society paradigm shift was defended in September, 2011, and the Degree was awarded in October, 2011 (Charungkaitikkul, 2011b). Presentation on The Lifelong Learning Society took place at the 2012 American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Conference,

Las Vegas, NV, November 7. [It was to have been presented by Charungkaitikkul; however, she was not able to be present at the AAACE Conference. Consequently, Henschke presented instead of her since he was present at the conference and very familiar with the content.] Paper on A Lifelong Learning Society Sustainable Model, was presented by the CU Professor at the World Conference in Comparative Education (WCCE), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June, 2013 (Charungkaitikkul, & Henschke 2013).

July 18-19, 2013, CU held The 1st, International Conference on LLL for All 2013: Sustainable Practices toward Lifelong Learning Society, in Bangkok, Thailand. In attendance and actively participating were 100 people from 13 Countries and the USA, mainly from Southeast Asia – Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Peoples' Republic of China, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and USA. Ten of these nations comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and are all focused on LLL, with Thailand being the leading nation of that group. There were 68 concurrent papers given at the conference on LLL, and a Keynote Paper on LLL & Andragogy was delivered by Henschke. CU is holding The 2nd International Conference on Lifelong Learning [LLL] for All 2014: Knowledge Creation for Lifelong Learning Community Mobilization, in Bangkok, September, 2014. A research paper on sustainable LLL development is being published by UNESCO, as a special issue of their journal (Charungkaitikkul and Henschke, 2014). An edited handbook of LLL education, came off the press in September, 2014, with 13 Chapters, one of which is by Henschke (Charungkaitikkul, Ed., 2014). Looking into the future, eight professors from the LLL Department at CU, plan to come to LU in the summer of 2015, to participate in a specially designed five-day workshop on LLL and Andragogy in Action, which will be conducted by andragogy professors at LU. In addition, one of the CU professors will give the open keynote address [on LLL], and another will give the closing keynote address [on The Learning Society], at the 2015 Missouri Asso-

Figure 1. Model of cultural learning



ciation for Adult, Continuing, and Community Annual Conference.

These five threads of LLL collaboration between CU and LU in the years between 2010 and 2015, indicated that a major contribution in LLL has been and is being made by these two Universities. It is anticipated that this collaboration will continue for many years to come.

All of this appears to culminate in Model of Cultural Learning, which includes content, process, and context. This issues into a Learning Society that is self-sufficient.

Therefore, the cultural learning in Thailand can be summarized as the model in Figure 1.

The model of cultural learning process broadly captures attributes associated with the four constituents of any cultural learning community, namely, the individual, people, culture, and the environment in specific contexts. A significant finding in this paper is that the proposed interventions at various levels (discipline, activities, community members,

learning networks, and individual persons) need a holistic application that constructively implements them in conjunction with each other. Such an effort will provide meaningful solutions since it stems from a realization of the deep connections between improvements in effectiveness of individual learning. It will allow learners to tap into their best potential that will thereby help them contribute according to their best abilities and strengths. Part of those strengths and realities of learners are their past cultural and educational experiences in other contexts.

The model of the cultural learning process provides understanding of the experiences of learners and helps in identifying interventions that may help strengthen effectiveness of learning toward knowledge and practice. It is very essential to promote and support the cultural learning toward these three components, namely, 1) cultural learning content: a deeper understanding of specific culture disciplines

and particular psychological and andragogical matters; 2) cultural learning process: the transferring the cultural learning content, applying cultural contents, and refining it with authentic learning situations and practicing to their own situations; 3) cultural learning context: the extent to which cultural learning is situated in contexts that allow the development of practice in real life, in cultural learning thought to be the local wisdom.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING OF CULTURAL LEARNING THROUGH LOCAL WISDOM

The following recommendations for improving of cultural learning through local wisdom include two main levels: national and local. (Office of the National Education Commission. *Indigenous Knowledge for a Learning Society* [Online] (2010).

7.1. At the National Level

1. Education through formal, non-formal, and informal approaches shall give emphasis to knowledge, morality, learning process, and integration of the knowledge about mathematics, science, languages, vocational skills, conservation and utilization of natural resources and the environment;
2. In organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies involved shall enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places by cooperating with parents, guardians, and all parties;
3. The state shall promote the running and establishment, in sufficient number and with efficient functioning, of all types of lifelong learning sources, namely: public libraries, museums, art galleries, zoological gardens, public parks, botanical gardens, science and technology parks, sport and recreation centers, data bases, and other sources of learning;

4. Basic education institutions shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to needs of the community and the society, local wisdom and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society, and nation;
5. Educational agencies shall mobilize human resources in the community to participate in educational provision by contributing their experience, knowledge, expertise, and local wisdom for educational benefits.

7.2. At the Community Level

1. Government organizations should actively coordinate with local authorities and public companies to create Thai wisdom teachers' learning network and transfer the knowledge and experiences;
2. Forming the department to coordinate between Thai wisdom teachers and other institutions to create activities at both national and community levels;
3. Providing local wisdoms teachers the opportunity to pass on their knowledge and experience, as well as to promote, organize, and participate in lifelong learning activities;
4. Building Thai wisdom teachers' learning center in each community;
5. Creating Thai wisdom teachers' network activity to create the relationship of Thai wisdom teachers continually;
6. Establishing Thai wisdom teachers' chamber for knowledge sharing and transmission;
7. Other institutions such as family, media, community, educational institutions, state agencies, and private organizations or foundations should be performed as Thai wisdom knowledge sources for general people and supporting Thai wisdom teachers in budgeting, people or places.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, developing and enhancing lifelong learning opportunities are at the core of benefiting individuals and society as a whole. Numerous approaches may contribute to this comprehensive enterprise. Creating a better understanding and the importance of lifelong learning will provide impetus for many to actively participate in learning activities. Multiple profitable gains from this may include: Encouraging each individual person to be interested in seeking knowledge at any and all times of his/her lifetime via various means and procedures; promoting and supporting lifelong learning activities among community members by engaging in delivering basic informal education, literacy promotion, continuing education; making available more learning resources and community learning centers in the society; placing an emphasis on people becoming more aware of the essential nature of non-formal and informal education; accepting the value of learning experience[s]; providing insight

into helping people grow through the inter-relationships of the three systems education, formal, non-formal, and informal; building up an extensive intellectual society in every sector by supporting access to quality lifelong learning among the people across the country; and, designing available educational resources aimed toward creating diversity in both local wisdom components and educational technology components for all the constituencies that are to be served.

Thus, to wrap up, local wisdom enables and helps to carry forward lifelong learning in society. It not only strengthens the community's economic situation on the basis of self-sufficiency, but also solidifies moral values and local culture among community people. Also, transferring knowledge and culture among generations through local wisdom teachers will enhance lifelong learning, especially with adult learning contributing to building and helping Thailand become a vibrant and flourishing Lifelong Learning Society.

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